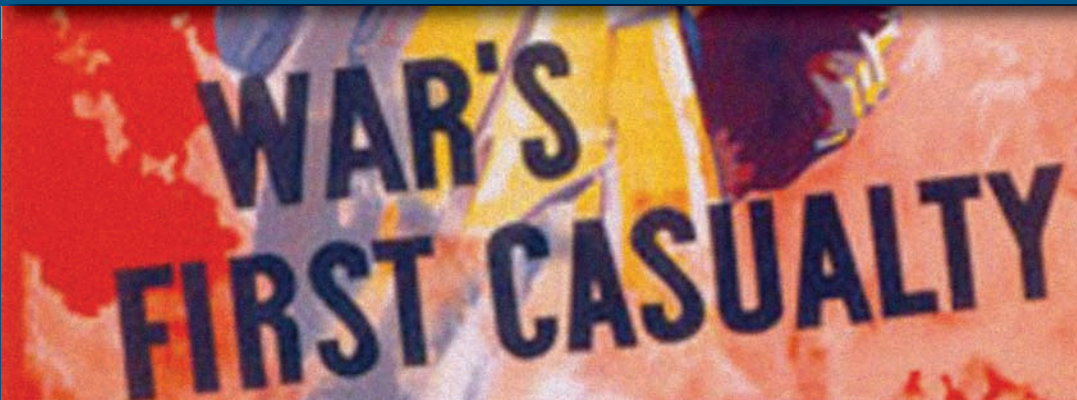




DEFEND AMERICA FIRST

**A Compilation of Five Anti-War Addresses
Delivered on Behalf of the America First Committee**





Defend America First

A Compilation of Five Addresses

*Delivered on Behalf of the America First Committee
Prior to the Advent of U.S. Intervention
In the 1939-1945 War in Europe*

FEATURING:

Gen. Hugh S. Johnson (Sept. 5, 1940)
Sen. Robert M. La Follette Jr. (Sept. 11, 1940)
Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. (Sept. 25, 1940)
Gen. Robert E. Wood (Oct. 4, 1940)
Col. Charles A. Lindbergh (Apr. 23, 1941)

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Above, a poster from the America First Committee urges Americans to actively protest American imperialist ventures in Europe and across the globe. The picture features President Franklin D. Roosevelt reading a “bedtime story” to a small boy, the American people. The bedtime story is entitled *The Story About the Destruction of Religion Thruout the World*. The boy replies, “Gee, that’s awful! Now read the one about Uncle Joe killing the fifty thousand Christians.”



Introduction

It is not likely that you are going to find any of the speeches reproduced in this volume in any of the standard historical works issued for public consumption today.

Each of these speeches, delivered on behalf of the non-partisan America First Committee, contains cogent (and indeed prophetic) arguments against U.S. intervention in the war in Europe that ultimately evolved into what we now know today as World War II.

The arguments put forth in these speeches represented—although one would hardly know it today—the thinking of an overwhelming majority of the American people. The eminent statesmen whose addresses are republished here (for the first time in fifty years) are of a mold that has long ago been broken.

Yet, truth be told, one of these men, Sen. Lodge, ultimately abandoned his American First nationalism and emerged, during the Cold War years, as a leading internationalist.

Special interests and plutocratic power brokers prevailed: through what one historian called “the back door to war,” the United States entered into the war and the course of history was forever altered—and perhaps not for the better, the claims of those whom Professor Harry Elmer Barnes contemptuously branded the “Court Historians” notwithstanding.

Ironically, although so many years have passed and times have changed so drastically, the warnings against the U.S. intervention in foreign conflicts are as prudent today as they were half a century ago. Modern-day politicians—where are the real statesmen?—could learn much by perusing this little volume.

The PRINCIPLES of the America First Committee are:

1. The United States must build an impregnable defense for America.
2. No foreign power nor group of powers, can successfully attack a PREPARED America.
3. American democracy can be preserved only by keeping out of the European war.
4. "Aid short of war," beyond the limitations of cash and carry, weakens national defense at home and threatens to involve America in war abroad.

Objectives—Non-Partisan

1. To bring together all Americans, regardless of possible differences on other matters, who see eye-to-eye on these principles. (This does not include Fascists or Communists.)
2. To urge Americans to keep their heads amid rising hysteria in times of crisis.
3. To provide sane national leadership for the majority of the American people who want to keep out of the European war.
4. To register this opinion with Congress.

National Committee

Avery Brundage	Dr. Albert W. Palmer
Janet Ayer Fairbank	William H. Regnery
John T. Flynn	Edward Rickenbacker
Henry Ford	Lessing J. Rosenwald
Bishop Wilbur E. Hammaker	Edward L. Ryerson, Jr.
Gen. Thomas Hammond	R. Douglas Stuart, Jr.
Jay C. Hormel	Louis Taber
Clay Judson	M. W. Thatcher
Kathryn Lewis	Oswald Garrison Villard
Alice Roosevelt Longworth	Mrs. Burton K. Wheeler
Hanford MacNider	Dr. George H. Whipple
Thomas N. McCarter	Gen. Robert E. Wood
Ray McKaig	R. Douglas Stuart
Sterling Morton	



Defend America First

*Speech of Gen. Hugh S. Johnson broadcast over
NBC (Blue) Network on Sept. 5, 1940.*

BY GEN. HUGH S. JOHNSON

This country is united as never before on national defense. The people have been ahead of their leaders. The leaders let defense lag shamelessly. The people demanded action. The leaders hesitated to increase taxes for defense. The people insisted on total defense at any sacrifice. We need waste no words arguing on unity for defense. It is now complete. But there is a very great and dangerous difference of opinion on what national defense means.

DEFEND AMERICA OR BRITAIN?

There is a committee in this country called Defend America by Aiding the Allies. Since there are no longer any allies, that means defend America by defending England. There is another committee called Defend America First. That is my ticket.

The Defend England Committee announced yesterday that of England's 2,000,000 soldiers, one-quarter of them, or 500,000, are armed with American army rifles, and that 100,000 tons of arms and explosives had been taken from our defense and sent to Britain—80,000 machine guns, 700 field artillery guns and mountains of ammunition. All are shortage-items with us.

This committee wants to send from our army, its flying fortresses, bombers, tanks, 250,000 more rifles, and the marvelous American secret

bombsights. It wants to use our flying fields to train pilots for Britain, and thinks we ought to detach a lot more ships for Britain's navy.

WHAT AMERICAN DEFENSE LACKS

The same day's news disclosed that our own army has less than 300 first line combat planes, and only fifty-nine heavy bombers. We have ordered only 1,500 modern fighting planes, only 176 heavy bombers. Many of them will not be delivered for over a year. We have not enough modern equipment for an army of 100,000 men. We have not even, to use a famous weasel word, "on order," equipment for the number of men we now plan to conscript. I do not know just how much of this helplessness and delay is due to defending America by defending Britain, but I know that a lot of it is due to that alone.

SYMPATHY OR SENSE

There are very few Americans who do not hate Hitler and hope that Britain wins. Our sympathies are all with England. But modern war is not risked by any wise nation, as George Washington was careful to tell us, for any reason other than its own defense or some other absolutely compelling cause. That is the reason why our friends who want us to take part in this war, call their committee, "Defend America," and add, "by helping Britain." They have gone a long distance with that slogan. Their argument is that our peace depends upon the British navy.

BOOTLEGGERS STATECRAFT

They go a lot further than that. They say that our peace, our Monroe Doctrine and the tranquility of the Americas always have depended on the British navy. Therefore they say Britain is fighting our war, that Britain is fighting to defend us. They say we owe it, both to gratitude and to our own defense, to help Britain. So they want to strip our army, navy, and air power of ships and guns and ammunition, and by various blind-pig loopholes in our own statutes, our treaties and international law, bootleg these hundreds of thousands of tons of lethal weapons to England.

IS THIS A CRAVEN AMERICA?

First of all, let me say that if that argument is true, we would cut a fine figure in history and with our own conscience and common sense and for our own defense, if we can be satisfied to pay so great a debt and fulfill

so great a duty with a lot of undercover gun-running and international hypocrisy.

If our peace and defense depended, and now depend, on England, and England is at bay, we ought to go to war with everything we have.

They say we once again ought to adopt a war dictatorship as our form of government. And once again pour out the full measure of our blood and fortune on foreign shores to the shattering of our own domestic economy and the possible destruction of the nation we have known and loved.

WE, ALONE, DEFEND OUR TRUST

Of course, it is nonsense to say that the British have defended us. As for the Monroe Doctrine, it has been seriously threatened only twice during its existence and England had something to do with both attempts—once in Venezuela when we threatened war and stopped her from seizing territory and as an original party to landing European troops in Mexico while we were tied up with the Civil War.

She is the only European nation that has actually taken additional American territory since Monroe and in defiance of that doctrine, and she did it twice—once in Honduras, once in the Falkland Islands.

OUR NAVY IS SUPREME

For her own purposes, England has commanded the seas—not only the Atlantic Ocean, but all oceans. But setting her navy aside for the moment, there has never been a time in the past 40 years when any other nation was in a position to challenge either our country or our Monroe Doctrine in the face of our own fleet.

Now, this is no time to rake up old wrongs against Britain, but in view of the arguments that are made to edge and jostle us into this war, it certainly is high time to explode all the old errors in this regard.

STAND ON OUR OWN FEET

Quite aside from all that, this country should have seen enough of what is going on in the world today to know that any nation which must rely for its own peace and for its own defense on the strength of any other nation, is lost. We cannot rely on any other power but our own—Great Britain or any other. We can rely on nothing on this earth but the strength of our own right arm, our own resources, and the patriotism, valor and fidelity of our own people and Thanks To God!—it's enough.

In the past three years, Europe has been strewn with the wreckage of nations that relied on other nations for their defense. Some of them relied on Britain. France had full power when Hitler started in 1933, full power to stop him there in his tracks. But she preferred to rely on her alliance with the little nations of Central Europe called the Cordon Sanitarie. They relied on her as she relied on them, and all relied on British sea power in the background.

GONE ARE THOSE WHO RELIED ON OTHERS

Austria so relied. They stepped aside and saw her swallowed. Czechoslovakia so relied. They went to Munich and tossed her to the wolves. Earlier, Britain had relied on France to help keep Mussolini out of Ethiopia, and France wanted Britain to help keep Hitler out of the Rhineland which would have kept the peace of Europe in this good day. But each reliance failed. Each nation was tying its shoe and looking in the other direction when the call for help came.

Finally, on a pledge of assistance if she would resist, Britain and France pushed Poland into the line of fire. Poland fell. No help came, and all of Northern Europe crumbled. Holland relied on Belgium, Belgium relied on France, France and Norway on Britain. Where are those nations now? All, except Britain, "Gone With The Wind." And the epitaph of each should read—"She Relied for Her Peace and Safety on Some Strength Other Than Her Own."

WILL AMERICA LEARN?

Despite all this we still are told that we must rely on Britain for our peace and our defense. Now I don't say all this in reproach of Britain or of any other stricken nation. But when the very reliance that ruined them is advanced to us as the reason either for our getting into this war or for continuing to rely for our defense on another nation, then I am very sure that it is a duty, however unpleasant, not merely to point out these simple facts of life but to make them as emphatic as the English language and the rules of radio permit.

We are told that Hitler is our threat in the Atlantic, or might become so over night if Britain fell. But we have a defense against that threat—as fine and strong a navy as sails the seven seas. Where is it? Facing Hitler? Oh no, it is out in the Pacific almost half a world away. Why? Is it hemisphere-defense of the Americas?

OUR FLEET IN THE PACIFIC

No professional strategist will say that there is any pending practical threat to our west coast that we could not guard against on a reasonable basis and with a moderate force. Nobody pretends that our fleet is out there to defend this continent. It is out there to give us a dominant voice in Asia where our material interest isn't worth half a battle squadron; and where the Philippines have asked us to abandon our moral obligation to our flag, which we have promised to do in 1946.

If that is defending the Americas, somebody has scrambled this good globe of ours all up and all geography needs to be turned inside out or upside down.

SAVING BRITAIN'S EMPIRE

Now, of course, it is no such thing. We are out there to help preserve the British empire in Asia. Is it necessary in order to keep the British fleet between us and Hitler? It may help, but it's a pretty far cry to such a conclusion. The real effect of it is not to keep the British navy between us and Hitler. Its purpose is to rest the peace and defense of America on some force other than our own. Present indications are that we are in more danger of waking up some morning to find ourselves at war in the Far East, 7,000 miles away, than of anything that could conceivably happen to us on our Atlantic coast.

BRINGING AMERICAN DICTATORSHIP

That would be a war over issues which few, if any, of our people would understand and in which fewer have any interest. Nobody who has studied this rapid trend of ours toward "war to defend America by defending Britain" will deny it. The further it goes, the more we shall have to give up every attribute of American freedom and democracy, and the closer we shall approach a war dictatorship which will be as drastic as any known in Germany and Italy.

AT HOME, 1940 IS NOT 1918

We had to do that in 1918. Woodrow Wilson hated that form of government. He gave up most of those great powers the day after the Armistice. This administration does not hate powers centralized and personalized in the president. It has constantly sought them ever since 1933, and it has never voluntarily surrendered one power granted on the excuse

of an emergency. Would this country be willing to trust it with complete war powers, or if the country did, would it ever give them up? A grave and growing danger is there.

WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

Our belligerent friends are arguing themselves into a curious dilemma. Keep out of war, by getting into war? Defend America, by defending Britain in Asia? Save our democracy, by giving up our democracy? In the meantime what have we been doing to defend ourselves?

Before I say anything about that, let me pay a tribute to Franklin D. Roosevelt for building up and equipping a large one-ocean navy and for providing a great chain of outlying air and naval bases for defense at sea.

PAPER AND PENCIL DEFENSE

There is no time here to discuss the method by which the latter act was done, more than to say that it was unnecessary, highly questionable and ominous. Aside from those preparations, however, the delay, the blunders, the lack of foresight in building up our landward defenses, are tragic and inexcusable.

To cover these failures, the country has been dazzled with appropriations of billions, by misleading congressional reports and by a constant display of rhetorical Roman candles. Now money "appropriated" is not "munitions in hand."

AMERICA GETS SECOND CHOICE

We have shifted to England war munitions that we cannot replace in years. The necessary equipment for the army and air force is neither on hand nor "on order." Even the contracts that are actually in performance, or negotiated, for cannon, real first-line fighting airplanes, engines, tanks, explosives, propellers, shells, automatic rifles, anti-aircraft guns, and other machines, are not a drop in the bucket compared with the defensive needs.

The bulk of this material in the present blundering progress will not begin to flow until 1942. The great new naval appropriation will not begin to speak for another year. In fact, we have gone backward in our strength in all these regards. Much of this delay was avoidable and all of it was inexcusable.

PREPARE AMERICA'S DEFENSE

If our friends who are so eager for us to take part in war before we are ready for war, would devote half the effort and propaganda that they are expending to “defend America by defending Britain,” to the single purpose of “defending America,” they would serve a triple purpose.

They would keep us out of war—not by getting into war, but by making us too strong for any nation to threaten or attack.

They would save our democracy, not by giving up our democracy for a war of dictatorship, but by making it do its job.

Finally, they would put us in a position to defend America, not by frittering our military and naval strength away all over the globe from Dover to Singapore, but by concentrating it for the defense of this continent.

DEFEND AMERICA FIRST

Defend, not by first defending the British empire upon which the sun never sets, defend America by Defending America First, last, and always.

Thank you and good night.



The Drift Toward War

*Speech of U.S. Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge Jr.
of Massachusetts presented Sept. 25, 1940.*

BY SEN. HENRY CABOT LODGE JR.

All Americans are horrified at the savage news from abroad. The slaughter of innocents, the destruction of everything that makes civilization possible, the maiming of bodies and the shattering of the human spirit are terrible beyond description. Frightful as these things are, in and of themselves, they become desperate when we realize that the motive for this holocaust is to establish an order which denies the dignity of the individual man, and thereby contradicts the chief purpose and aim of the American dream.

AMERICA FIRST

What must we do to be ready for the worst? We must first, I think, have clearly in mind that our real duty, as Americans, is to America. As American citizens we can have no other duty, and we cannot have our loyalties divided by our strong personal sympathy for those brave men and women abroad who fight for their freedom. Our duty is to keep the United States out of this terrible war insofar as this lies within our power.

THE BEST WAY TO AVOID WAR

Broadly speaking there are two ways in which we can get into war. One way is for a foreign nation to provoke us so that we have to fight. The other way is for us to provoke a foreign nation so that they have to fight. The best way to avoid involvement in war by the first method is to be so

manifestly strong that no foreign nation will dare to molest us. Force is the only universally understood language in the world today. For this reason—and for this reason only—I favor building up our Army and Navy, and building them promptly—to a point which will make any foreign attack on the United States obviously and utterly hopeless.

OUR OWN NEEDS

Have we such an Army and Navy today? We have not. It was recently testified that we only had enough equipment to put an army of 75,000 men into the field completely equipped, and that it will not be until a year from next January that we shall have enough equipment for an army of 750,000—a figure only slightly in excess of the total of the late Belgian Army. It is stated officially that in the light of the European battle experience all of our airplanes are obsolete. It is not disputed that we have only a one-ocean Navy, and that it will take between 6 and 7 years to develop a so-called two-ocean Navy. And the one Navy which we now have must use the Panama Canal to move from ocean to ocean, 100 percent protection. Moreover, it will take 6 years to finish the double sets of locks at Panama which will greatly increase its safety.

This is not a pretty picture, but it is a truthful one—which is not obscured by the fact that frantic and praiseworthy efforts are now being made to remedy the shortages. It is, moreover, hard to understand how we could arrive at this point in our destiny so woefully unprepared when we look at the warnings of the past few years. In the fall of 1938, for example, it was clear of all observers that the spectre of war, raging and terrible, was again at large in the world.

But we did not heed it.

I wonder why not. It was surely not due to a desire for economy. We were lavishing billions on all kinds of luxury projects. Even in the case of our military appropriation, a large part of the funds went to care-taking and housekeeping and other non-combatant purposes.

It is astounding to note that we spent a larger proportion of federal funds on national defense in the fiscal year 1929 than we have in any subsequent year. Seventeen and seven-tenths percent of our federal expenses went to national defense in that year, as compared with eleven and two-tenths percent in the year 1939. Even more astounding is the fact that in spite of threats abroad, we spent a smaller part of our federal funds on national defense in 1939 than we did in 1938. I do not try to give the reason for this

negligence. The stark fact remains that we are not prepared today to avoid the danger of war by being so strong that no one will dare to provoke us.

THREATS AND BLUSTER

What has been our record since these first awful warnings of war became so glitteringly clear two years ago? Unfortunately, our record has been a wavering and a contradictory one, a record of bluster, a record of threats which we could not enforce.

We apparently assumed that because we had more millionaires and skyscrapers and radios and sedans than any other country, we were therefore a great nation in a military sense. Of course the dictators were not fooled. They considered us a puny nation from a military standpoint, and ignored our threats.

INCONSISTENCIES

It is a record which shows that we have not been clear in our own minds. We first enacted a law placing an embargo on the sale of arms to all belligerents. Then the very advocates of this scheme repealed it.

It is a record which extended understandable sympathy to the Allies at the same time that the extension of economic advantages to Russia proceeded apace.

We seem to have had every kind of a policy except a consistent policy of preparedness for America first. Of course, some will look at the great effort now being made to arm America and will conclude that we have learned our lesson, and that we are now united on our goal.

But the record of the years certainly holds no ground for the belief that these efforts are more than appropriations of funds and encouraging beginnings. Mr. William S. Knudsen, of the Defense Commission, who is surely a competent witness, says we will not have equipment for 2,000,000 men before the end of 1943.

Senator Byrd, a most accurate man, says that the Army and Navy tell him that since May 1 of this year only 99 planes have been ordered by the Army and 244 by the Navy. We have words and inspection trips and publicity, but we do not see any new guns or planes or tanks. There is more talk about the ships and guns we are sending away than about those we are getting.

MISLEADING IDEAS

Moreover, we are still in the grip of misleading ideas. What are some of these ideas? We are told that the United States should actively take sides in this war because otherwise the United States will be alone. The word “alone” is uttered with a horrifying undertone. Yet is it not obvious that every nation is alone, that we have been alone for most of our history, and that it is far better to be alone than it is to have one’s fate bound up with that of nations less fortunately situated?

DANGEROUS HALLUCINATION

We are told that our ships and our guns, if not actually our men, should take their place in the European struggle, and this statement is made on the grounds that to do so will keep the war away from the United States. This is a very dangerous hallucination.

The same logic which says that our ships should be in European waters in order to keep the enemy away impels one to the further contention that it would be even better to have had our troops in the heart of Europe, which is at an even greater distance from our shores. Anyone with military experience knows that this is a question of judgment—that they can be placed too close to your body, and that they can be placed too far away. If your outposts are placed too far away you get into needless fights which you often cannot win.

Is not the question of sending military equipment abroad an entirely military question, provided, of course, that we all agree that our first duty is to the United States? The decision as to where our outposts should be placed is a military decision, and so is the decision as to what the chance is that American equipment will be used by some hostile power against Americans.

FOMENTED HYSTERIA

I call attention also to the tendency to create fear and hysteria. I know that there are those who say that only by frightening people can we obtain preparedness. I cannot hold to such a low estimate of the intelligence of the people. I think we can be alert without being alarmed.

Finally, we see a lack of frankness and a lack of candor in our official attitude toward the issue of war and peace. Policies which are universally popular are tied up with policies which are very debatable in order to pull us along. The law keeping American ships out of the war zone—a very popular measure—was tied up with the repeal of the arms embargo—and

you could not separate the two. The acquisition of naval bases—a popular measure—was coupled with the sending of part of our fleet to the war zone.

LACK OF FRANKNESS

An example of this frankness is the so-called destroyer trade. It so happens that I was the first to introduce legislation, with my colleague, Senator McNary, for acquisition of naval bases in this hemisphere. I favored outright American ownership and not a lease and a sharing of sovereignty—and consequent sharing of trouble—with some other power. We now have these bases on a lease in exchange for which we have agreed to send 50 destroyers abroad. This is the same as saying that we agreed to send a part of our Navy. Let us call things by their true names.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF GIVING AWAY PART OF OUR FLEET

I ask you to consider some of the consequences of this act. First, we deplete our own admittedly inadequate one-ocean Navy.

It is said that we were not using these ships. I point out that we are not using the Army and Navy. We hope never to use them. We have them so that we shall not have to use them. It is said that these ships were obsolete. I submit that they are not obsolete for the training of men in all the arts of seamanship, navigation, gunnery and engineering. We do not know how many officers and men are being deprived of important training because of the loss of these destroyers, but there must be many. And in active battle service in the fleet they are far better than no ships at all.

OUR NEED FOR "OBSOLETE" EQUIPMENT

A short time ago, as a Reserve Officer, I served a tour in a company of tanks. Some these vehicles were obsolete. But men could be taught driving, repairing, tactics, gunnery and signal communication in these tanks. And these tanks are better than no tanks at all.

Moreover, our 400 tanks here are worth more than 400 tanks in the battle of Flanders. In that battle 400 tanks were destroyed in a day. They can be used over and over here to train separate sets of men.

KEEP OUR WEAPONS FOR DEFENSE OF AMERICA

I urge that our weapons be kept for our own defense. That is my personal plea. I submit further, however, that if weapons are to be sent abroad, it should be done in the open, after debate, with public participation, by

consent of Congress. If we really want to send weapons abroad, let us do it wholeheartedly and consciously—not slip sideways into the chasm.

LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE ON WAR OR PEACE

Of course this is not the only aspect of the matter which should have been submitted to Congress. The sending of destroyers makes us a partner in the hostilities. Whether or not you agree with this, should not the people have a say in so vital a matter? It makes the American people a partner in the enforcement of the blockade.

Whether or not you agree with this, should not the people have a say in so vital a matter? I submit not only that they should have a say, but that we should know what more weapons of ours it is planned to send. With rumors current that two-thirds of our aircraft production is going abroad, the time has come for us to settle this question. Either we want to train American boys to fly military planes or we do not. If we do, the planes must be here.

WE VITALLY NEED EVERY FLYING FORTRESS

We also hear of a plan to send 32 of our 4-engined bombers—the so-called flying fortress—abroad. We have 46 of these planes. No one has ever suggested that these ships were obsolete. They are so modern and up-to-date as to be almost unique. European nations, having to fight in congested areas, have not set so much store by the long range plane as we have who are situated between two vast oceans. We must, of course, look towards Europe, but we must also look towards the Pacific and towards the Caribbean.

These are areas in which long-range planes are of the utmost value. I pass over the fact that we do not allow a man to fly one of these planes until he has been flying for four years. If these ships were sent abroad, they would almost inevitably be flown by inexperienced crews with a consequently greater risk of destruction or of falling into enemy hands. Very few pilots in Europe have flown a 4-engined ship, or have had experience as a member of a crew of a 4-engined ship.

It is a very complex job and we cannot train men in the operation of these ships unless we have the ships. We ought to have a thousand of them; we only have 46. It would indeed be deplorable if we found ourselves left with only 14.

ONE QUARTER MILLION DOLLARS—ONE YEAR TO BUILD

Nor should we forget that these planes costs about a quarter of a million dollars and that when production really gets under way the time required to manufacture a flying fortress will be at least one year.

SECRET DEALS

Moreover, the papers are full of stories that another deal is contemplated whereby our Navy is to be given the use of foreign naval bases in the extreme Far East. Singapore in Malaya and a port in Borneo are mentioned. Every high school student knows that a base in the American hemisphere is one thing and a base on the opposite side of the globe is another. This would be a grievous, dangerous step towards trouble. When matters of this kind—any one of which would be a major Congressional issue in ordinary times—are settled secretly by the Executive, it is small wonder that American citizens ask themselves: “If the Executive can do these things without action by Congress, can he not also declare war without Congress?”

OUR JOB

In conclusion I say: America faces certain dangers. America faces the danger of entering this terrible war because we are so weak that some nation will provoke us. The remedy for this is preparedness. America faces the danger of entering the war because we provoke some another nation. The remedy for this is national self-control, and a leadership which thinks first of America always. We face a third danger. If we enter a war that is not successful, then everything we prize would be destroyed.

WE NEED NOT GET IN

My fellow-citizens, woefully unprepared America is in peril of entering this war—a war which would destroy this Republic as we have always known it. The dreadful drift is on, moving steadily and stealthily like a thick, dank mist across our consciousness. By preparing America, by being single-minded in our allegiance to America, we can stop this fatalistic assumption that we are sure to get in. We need not get in. We must not get in. Let us stop this drift toward war.



Are We on the Road to War?

*Speech of U.S. Sen. Robert M. La Follette Jr. of Wisconsin.
Delivered over CBS Network, Sept. 11, 1940.*

BY ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE JR.

One reason I feel so strongly about the course of which our country has embarked is that I have seen this tragedy before. I feel as though I had walked into a movie only to discover that I had seen the picture years ago, under a somewhat different name and with a different cast.

During 1916-1917 I was one of my father's secretaries. As many of you remember, he fought to the last ditch to prevent the involvement of the land he loved in the European war of his generation. Fortunately for my education, I was close to the historic battle which raged in Washington. Its full, tragic meaning burned into me for life.

OLD WAR, NEW SLOGANS

As I sit in the United States Senate today, the words that are spoken and the things that are done here in Washington have a tragic ring of familiarity. Some of the words and slogans are different. But in spite of new phrases cooked up by the best propagandists in the business, we are going, step by step, down that same road we took in 1916-1917.

You and I love our country. The overwhelming majority of us want with every fiber of our being to do what is best for this nation. We sense with that true instinct which God has given to people in times of great crises that the decision we make will be of world-shaping importance.

This is the reason why we are more worried and our souls are more harrowed than ever before in our lifetime. We want above all else to choose the right course. We have a fundamental and catastrophic decision to make and we must make it now. We must decide whether or not we are going to war in the Old World.

PROPAGANDA OF JITTERS

It is tragic that we cannot make the most important decision in the history of our country with clear heads and steady hearts. But our emotions are aroused because deep down inside of all of us, save for a few bundists and communists, there is a natural loathing and aversion for the brutality of the dictators—red, black, and brown. We detest their methods and their objectives. We are shocked by the horrible ruthlessness of total war.

Propaganda, in the movies, over the radio, in the press, and by word of mouth, seeks to play upon our emotions and to shape our decision. For various reasons fear and hysteria are being fomented. Jitters are being cultivated in the hope the people will not be able to think straight.

These efforts we must resist, for they are designed to becloud our reason and if successful will end in disaster for our country. I appeal to the people who do not want our nation plunged into the holocaust, not to be sucked along the road to war by easy stages and false reasoning.

HOCUS-POCUS FOR DEBTS

The process of switching the signs on the road to war began a year ago when the people were told that repeal of the arms embargo would make our neutrality more secure, although the interventionists knew it could only have the opposite result.

Once the interventionists got the arms embargo repealed they were not satisfied with opening our munitions markets to the Allies. The next step in their program was to turn over arms, ammunition, planes, and implements of war from our own Army and Navy. These included the latest deliverable types of war equipment.

Their most recent move was the famous destroyer base lease deal revealed when the Administration generously notified the Congress that it had traded 50 American destroyers to Great Britain. We could have had these bases in exchange for the old war debt.

The hocus-pocus under which American destroyers equipped with the latest protection devices and armament became “obsolete” and “over-age”

should not deceive us. Under the definition 50 percent of the combat vessels in the United States Navy could be declared “over-age” and yet we know that our Navy is our first line of defense.

FRAUDULENT LABELS

Unless we stop in our tracks, there will be no end to the policy of taking everything that Britain wants and labeling it “surplus” or “over-age” and “obsolete.” The next step after over-age destroyers will be middle-age battleships. Then it will be youngish cruisers. In the end they will be calling for our right-aged sons. You and I have been told for months that this nation must strengthen its defenses, must built an impregnable military machine capable of protecting ourselves from any aggressor or combination of aggressors. And you and I have agreed whole-heartedly. In this session of Congress alone I have voted for more than 15 billion dollars for the up-building of our national defense.

DEFEND AMERICA FIRST

But all the while we are voting more money to prepare to defend this hemisphere against all comers, we are dissipating strength by sending huge quantities of guns, planes and warships across the ocean. Now the interventionists are demanding that the latest type of planes and tanks, our secret bomb sight, and other indispensable war materiel to be sent abroad.

There are tragic lessons written over the ravaged soil of Europe—lessons which we must learn if we hope to escape the fate of the conquered democracies abroad. And the most powerful lesson of all is this: National defense does not consist alone of arms, munitions, and trained manpower. It requires just as much a nation and a people whose social, economic, and spiritual house is in order.

And ours is not.

MEET OUR HOME DANGERS

We would do well to remember that communism, fascism and Nazism did not rear their ugly heads in Europe because the people of Russia, Italy and Germany wanted to live under barbaric despotism. This trilogy of totalitarianism came and conquered because the people of those countries were desperate, poverty-stricken, hungry, and without hope. The germs of these parasitic “isms” thrive and multiply in the stagnant pools of unemployment, poverty, and hopelessness.

How can we prepare to meet the menace of totalitarianism? We cannot do it, as we are now, by handing over desperately needed implements of defense to the British. We cannot meet the menace of dictatorship by coddling and appeasing the profiteering minority of industrialists into making guns and tanks and planes and ships for us only when they think the profits will be high enough!

The way to meet the challenge of brutalitarianism is to buckle down to the job of strengthening our own defenses, internal as well as external, social and economic as well as military.

DEMOCRACY'S DUTY TO MAN

Here in America, agriculture is entering the third decade of depression. Ten million men remain unemployed. The needy aged struggle along with a pittance which denies self-respect. And youth, the nation's most precious asset, has little to look forward to beyond enforced service in the Army.

A young man who earns thirty dollars a week will have to take a 75 percent cut in pay during his year of compulsory military service, but some businessmen are demanding and getting a higher and higher ceiling for profits arising out of defense orders.

Such a distorted method of dealing with two groups in society will play a powerful fifth column role in lowering our national morale and weakening our resistance to attack.

These are the problems which confront America and confront us today and *here*. They are more real, more menacing to the future of democracy and our way of life than all the propaganda scares of imminent invasion.

BUILD AN IMPREGNABLE DEFENSE

Our patriotic course is clear. We must set ourselves resolutely to the task of building an impregnable America with military might, economic security, and spiritual well-being. But we cannot do these things if we allow ourselves to be whipped and buffeted about by hysteria.

We cannot make ourselves strong internally by shutting our eyes to the problems at home. We cannot make ourselves strong militarily by stripping our own defense in order to support the interventionist's vague and shifting frontier in Europe.

We cannot preserve our American freedom by participating in war, because as soon as we do, we will become a dictatorship just like the dictatorships abroad whose destruction would be our announced war objective.

NO HALF-WAY HOUSE ON WAR'S HIGHWAY

A subtle, diabolically clever and powerful effort to sneak up on our blind side has been going on for long, weary months. We are told in forty-one different ways that we can have our cake and eat it too. We are asked to believe that we can play with fire and not get burned. We are assured that there is a halfway house on the road to war. This is false doctrine. It violates every rule of straight thinking and it flies in the face of history. Unless the citizens of America wake up quickly and exert their influence to stop our progress toward war, it will come.

It is my unshakable conviction after weighing all the facts, that we must stay out of war in Europe and Asia, if government of the people, by the people and for the people is not to perish from this earth.

The people of America can still win this fight for peace and freedom. They will win if they will notify their Senators and Representatives that they are no longer fooled by trick phrases like "steps short of war," that they are committed to preserving and strengthening democracy by building an impregnable military defense and a dynamic social and economic order.

KEEP AMERICA OUT OF WAR

The two old parties have evaded this momentous issue in their platforms. Their presidential candidates see eye to eye on foreign policy. This deprives the people of an effective choice in the presidential campaign on the supreme issue. But the people can express their will on the question of going to war in Europe or Asia by electing men to the House and Senate who will vote against a foreign overseas war.

If we succeed, we can make democracy function in the last great area where it still lives, and by our strength and our success assume a position from which we can offer hope and leadership to the war-weary peoples of the world. I ask those who are interested in the fight to stay out of war in the Old World to write to the America First Committee, Chicago, Illinois.

Clay Judson Introduces Gen. Robert E. Wood

BY CLAY JUDSON

We are at a crisis in our international relations. On the decisions now made by the people of this country and their leaders may depend our national welfare for generations to come.

At earlier meetings you have had presented to you dramatically, brilliantly, emotionally, the view of those who believe that the ideal of American life now demands a full participation in the war between England and Germany, and a willingness to take all the risks of war which that involves.

Now there is another view, equally patriotic, equally above question from the standpoint of ideals—but diametrically opposed in its spiritual and its practical approach to the problem. This view sees America's destiny as the preservation of peace for its 135,000,000 people; the abstention on any account, and no matter how emotional the appeal, from European and Asiatic wars; the maintenance of the processes of democracy and of civilization.

Those who hold this view are certain that we cannot enforce democracy on the rest of the world by force and arms. They believe war will be ruinous to everything we cherish most, and they believe we *can* avoid war, and should make every effort to do so.

This is the view of the man who addresses you today. He was born sixty-one years ago in the State of Missouri. Forty years ago he graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point. His first military service was in the Philippine insurrection. As Chief Quartermaster at Panama during the days of the canal construction under General Goethals, he was charged with the duty of acquiring food, clothing, and supplies for the 40,000 employees and officials in the Canal Zone. During the World War he had a major responsibility for supplying our entire military establishment. After the war, in civil life, his marked ability gave him immediate recognition in the commercial world, where he served for ten years as President of Sears, Roebuck & Company, and is now the Chairman of its Board of Directors.

For his outstanding services during the World War he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. He is a Commander of the British Order of St. Michael & St. George. He is a knight of the French Legion of Honor. At present he is the Acting Chairman of the America First Committee.

I am honored in presenting to you General Robert E. Wood, who will speak on "Our Foreign Policy."

—CLAY JUDSON

Former president of the Council on Foreign Relations



Our Foreign Policy

Gen. Wood's Speech

*Speech of General Robert E. Wood, acting chairman,
America First Committee. Delivered before the
Council on Foreign Relations, Friday, Oct. 4, 1940*

BY GEN. ROBERT E. WOOD

I hesitated to accept the invitation of my friends, Dr. Lichtenstein and Mr. Utley, to address this gathering for two reasons—first, because I do not feel on a par as a speaker with the very eminent persons who have addressed these gatherings; second, because my views are opposed to those of a probable majority of my listeners—and I may add—opposed to those of some of my dearest friends and relatives. I have a brother-in-law on the William Allen White Committee.

But it is one of the beauties of a democracy that in time of peace, at least, men are free to express their opinions and honest men respect opposing opinions if those opinions are sincere and free of ulterior motive, and now is a time for all honest men to express their convictions.

THE HOUR OF DECISION

This country is on the eve of momentous decisions. The results of these decisions may be so far reaching that they may have an effect for good or bad on the life of this country for at least a generation. I am at the stage of life when I do not care as to the effect on myself or my own gen-

eration. I do greatly care what the effects will be on my children and grandchildren and their generation.

There are two schools of thought in this country on the subject of our foreign policy. They may be termed "Interventionists" and "Isolationists." These terms are not exactly descriptive, because all interventionists are not extreme interventionists and most isolationists are only isolationists as to Europe and Asia, but not isolationists as to the balance of North America and South America.

I except from my discussion those who have ulterior motives—anything except the welfare of our country. That would include the Communists who really desire to destroy our Government; the Nazis and members of the Bund who put the interests of Germany above those of this country; some ultra-pacifists who forget the interests of their country in their desire for peace at any price; a limited number of extreme Anglophiles who put the interests of Great Britain above those of their own country.

OUR COMMON GROUND

These schools of thought are in violent opposition, but there are certain points of agreement among all classes except perhaps what may be called the lunatic fringe of our population.

These points of agreement are:

First—the necessity for a strong defense—a strengthening of our army and navy and air force. Our people are practically unanimous on this subject—the only differences are on differences of detail. It is obvious that the richest nation of the world, in a world of force, must make itself impregnable. Second—the belief that no foreign nation must obtain possession of any part of the two Americas and that the United States must be prepared to defend the North American continent, and at least that portion of the South American continent as far as the Equator. There is some difference of opinion as to whether military and naval protection should go as far as Cape Horn. Third—access to our great industrial plant by Great Britain within the limits of the neutrality law—that is, unlimited right of purchase by Great Britain of planes, tanks, munitions of war, raw materials from private manufacturers, provided she can pay for them and provide her own transportation. And this I may add is a very great aid.

Without this aid now being given, England could not long carry on the war, for her supplies of raw materials, her steelmaking capacity, munitions and plane plants are insufficient for a long major war. Without the

production facilities of the United States she would be crushed. Theoretically, Germany is entitled to the same privilege—actually, on account of the British blockade, she cannot use our facilities, but she has no right to complain. I believe the overwhelming majority of the citizens are in accord with these three principles. I know I am.

HERE DIFFERENCES BEGIN

But it is when we get beyond the third point that opinion diverges sharply. The present administration in power, probably the majority of our editors and columnists, a very influential body of public opinion as represented by the Committee to Defend America by Aiding Britain is in favor of our government turning over some of our flying fortresses, more destroyers, more planes and merchant ships. Others, even more extreme, favor an outright alliance with Great Britain and a declaration of war on Germany. Now what are the fundamental arguments for this point of view? They may be reduced to three principle reasons:

First—the totalitarian state with its ideology, with its record of persecution, is repugnant to our ideals and should be destroyed, even if we have to enter a war to accomplish this result. Second—our own protection depends on Britain as our first line of defense, and if she falls, we are exposed to the onslaught of a totalitarian combination. Per se, it follows that we must give England all the aid we can, even at the risk of entering the war. Third—if Britain is defeated, it will be impossible for a free competitive, unorganized and unmanaged industrial system to compete with a totalitarian system.

WAR DOES NOT DESTROY IDEOLOGIES

As to the first reason, you cannot destroy an ideology by waging war on it. The conditions created in Europe by the Versailles Treaty were largely responsible for the rise of Hitler and the Nazi philosophy. The history of Europe for the last 100 years is a story of cruelties, persecutions, injustices. No government was more repugnant to our ideals and ideas than the old Czarist regime of Russia—it had over many years a series of pogroms, but we remained on friendly terms with Russia. Up to 1917 we had always remained true to the principles of foreign policy laid down by the founders of our country: the policy of keeping aloof from the quarrels of Europe and Asia.

The Communistic regime of Russia under Lenin and Stalin was equally opposed to our principles and was detested by the majority of our

people. Nevertheless, we have maintained our relations with Russia, and we have certainly had no idea of making war on that country.

SENTIMENTALISTS OR REALISTS?

A nation cannot be a knight-errant. It must be realistic. Great Britain, during her entire history, has been coldly realistic, and her success in building up her Empire has been due to her realism. As individuals we can give vent to our generous impulses or even to our pet hates, but our statesmen, our editors, our molders of public opinion must consider that it is not their individual fortunes and lives that are to be considered, but those of 135,000,000 of their fellow citizens.

Now as to the second reason—our military defense in the event of a German victory. Our country has gone through a curious transformation of thought since May 10th. From the underestimate of the military and economic strength of Germany, it has gone to the opposite extreme of overestimating that strength. From some of the remarks heard on the Eastern seaboard in June, we would have thought that New York and Boston were in imminent danger of being bombed.

BOMBINGS ALONE CANNOT WIN

Now the events in Spain, Poland, Belgium and France showed the major importance of the air arm when supported by tanks, infantry and a modern army. But Spain showed that bombing of cities, unsupported by an army, cannot win a war or even shake the morale of a population if the nation is of tough fiber like the Spanish and English peoples.

Apparently the Battle of England is demonstrating the same principle. Unless an army can cross the Channel, the German air force cannot impose a decision on England. Casualties and material damage—yes. The 15,000 casualties in London so far are but a drop in the bucket for a nation of 45,000,000 people; more casualties were incurred in single days of the Verdun, Ypres and Somme offenses.

The destruction of apartment houses, stores, public buildings do not constitute a blow to the military strength of a nation. If the docks, railroads, power plants and munitions plants are put out of commission, it does affect the military effort, but unless it is done on a gigantic scale the nation cannot be subdued, and all evidence is to the effect that military damage thus far has not been of such a serious character as to severely impair the island's defense.

CAN ENGLAND BE INVADED?

As for an invasion, at the great risk of being called a false prophet, I doubt whether any invasion will ever be made, and if it is attempted, it will be decisively repulsed. To land 250,000 Germans in England, with mechanized equipment, ammunition and necessary supplies would be a gigantic operation. Once landed, that force would have to face 1,500,000 Englishmen under arms, fighting on their own island behind strong defenses. And to land those 250,000 Germans means practically complete mastery of the air, blocking off the English fleet, complete control of the Channel—none of which objectives have yet been attained after more than a month of intensive effort. To sum up, I doubt whether the island can be conquered, and I am quite sure the British fleet cannot be put out of commission.

Now we come to our own danger of invasion and the perfectly fantastic hysteria that pervaded this country after the battle of France. *I think any competent military or naval expert, certainly the vast majority, will tell you that there is absolutely no danger of an invasion of the United States even if Germany is completely victorious*, and I doubt whether she will be. The amount of shipping required for the transportation of even 250,000 men of a modern mechanized army with their ammunition and supplies over 3,000 miles of ocean is colossal and it is to be presumed that our own navy and air force will not be idle.

NO ARMY CAN ATTACK US

If it is impracticable or at least exceedingly difficult for an army to cross 25 miles of Channel, what valid grounds are there for supposing that a large army can 3,000 miles of ocean to invade a continent?

Some will inquire—why should it not be possible for Germany to seize bases in Mexico or Central America and attack from those countries? Again, that presupposes an overwhelming sea power. But even if that sea power were present, there would again be the same difficulties of a 3,000 mile long line of communication for an invading army. And an army once landed must cross an exceedingly difficult terrain before ever arriving at the Texas border. I think that hypothesis may be safely dismissed.

PANIC FIRST—THEN WAR!

Now we come to the favorite bogey—air attacks. I quote from Major Al Williams' recent speech, reprinted in the Congressional Record—“Oceans and extended lines of communication are still vital factors in

modern warfare. President Roosevelt's panicky flight schedule for the air invasion of America is ridiculous, worthy of Hollywood and certainly not of the White House.

"To support my argument against the President's wild flight schedule for a foreign air invasion of the United States I offer a single incontrovertible reason. With all their air power the Germans could not attack and subdue England from air bases 300 to 500 miles distant. Instead they seized air bases on the north coast of Holland, Belgium and France 20 to 100 miles distant from the coast of England. Each and every stage of the fantastic itinerary for the air invasion of America would have to be conquered for the establishment of major air bases for the enemy attempting the job. The President must know this—but apparently the pattern is panic first, and then war."

AN EXHAUSTED GERMANY IS HARMLESS

All of this presupposes a completely victorious Germany, ready at the end of a long and costly struggle, to immediately embark on a new and perilous adventure across 3,000 miles of ocean against a nation of 130,000,000 people. The present war represents seven years of preparation on the part of Germany. So-called total war represents a prodigal expenditure of labor, money and effort. Steel is rapidly consumed, aircraft and mechanical equipment are rapidly worn out, reserves of all kinds are exhausted, not to mention the wear and tear on human beings. A nation that for seven years has been given guns instead of butter is apt at the end of this war to demand more butter from its leaders.

So on every count, it seems inconceivable to me that Germany at the end of the war, even if aided by its allies, who will be in a worse condition of exhaustion than Germany itself, will attack the United States. And if this country with its 135,000,000 people and its two great natural ocean barriers cannot defend itself unaided by Britain or anybody else, it does not deserve to survive. The great nation is on the downward path to destruction.

EUROPE MUST HAVE OUR GOODS

Now as to our economic problems. An economic war after the war—the loss of our European, Asiatic and South American trade. I have a high personal regard for Walter Lippmann's brains and ability, but I believe his picture of an unequal contest between a totalitarian economy and a free economy is misleading. After all, when two nations or two continents each

have things the other needs trade eventually regardless of the feelings each may have for each other. Europe needs us more than we Europe—our materials and products are more important to her than hers to us. True, Germany has reduced largely its purchases from us, but more from necessity than choice. As far as South America is concerned, we can always obtain the lion's share of the trade of Mexico, Central America, Colombia and Venezuela because we buy the metals of Mexico, the coffee and bananas of Central America and Colombia, the oil of Venezuela. In those countries, our geographical location must always give us the edge. We can take the coffee of Brazil but not its cotton; so its trade will naturally divide between Europe and the United States. It is in Argentina and Chile that our troubles come. We cannot take the meat, cotton and wool of Argentina because we produce those products ourselves. The same applies to the copper and nitrates of Chile. We cannot sell unless we buy and that's a far greater obstacle than all Nazism.

It must not be forgotten that Germany put on an intensive drive for trade in South America in the period 1936-1938, and if my recollection of the figures is correct, while Germany's percentage of the trade gained somewhat, the gain was not large, and it was largely at the expense of Great Britain; our trade declined only a fraction of one percent.

WE'LL GET OUR SHARE OF FOREIGN TRADE!

No man can foretell the future, but as long as we have products South America can use and above all, if they have products we can use, we will get our full share of the trade. As for Asia, the same remarks pertain as to Europe. Japan needs us far more than we need her. Our trade with Japan incidentally runs between five and six times the trade of China, whom we are making such great efforts to help.

Even if Japan gets control of the Dutch East Indies—and that is not assured—she is going to be more anxious to sell us rubber and tin to obtain dollar exchange than we are to buy the products. And if war with Japan comes, we can get Bolivian tin and develop our synthetic rubber. We are certainly as resourceful as the Germans who are filling 90% of their rubber requirements with the synthetic article.

In 1937 Colombia's trade with us was 168,000,000 pesos, with Germany 40,000,000. Of Venezuela's trade, the United States took 12.5% of their imports and furnished 53% of the exports, Germany 13.6%. 42.5% of Costa Rica's imports came from the United States, 23% from Germany. Of her exports 45% went to the United States and 19.5% to Germany.

As for lack of organization, if need be, we can meet fire with fire; we can set up exports cartels and mass purchasing organizations and we can do this without danger to our system.

THE AMERICAS MUST STAND TOGETHER!

Americans like myself feel that our true mission is in North America and South America. We stand today in an unrivaled position. With our resources and organizing ability we can develop, with our Canadian friends, an only partially developed continent like North America and a virgin continent like South America. The reorganization and proper development of Mexico alone would afford an outlet for our capital and energies for some time to come.

And while I think we should try in every way to maintain the friendship of our neighbors to the South, I think we should also make it clearly understood that no government in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean South American countries will be tolerated unless it is friendly to the United States and that, if necessary, we are prepared to use force to attain that object.

Instead of what seems to be a sane objective we are on the verge of throwing our treasure and our blood into a European war, with consequences that no one can foretell.

I respect the honest views of honest Americans, no matter how opposed they may be to my own, but there are two matters that I resent: First is the attempt to smear anyone opposed to what I might call the majority publicized viewpoint of what we should do in this war.

When the editor of a pink New York sheet denounces Col. Lindbergh as the head of the Fifth Column in the U.S., we have reached the summit of mudslinging. You may disagree violently with Col. Lindbergh, you may feel he has made serious mistakes, but you have no right to denounce a courageous, patriotic American citizen as a traitor merely because he disagrees with your views. That is as bad as the Nazis, an attempt to suppress freedom of speech.

The other point I resent is the way the issue is being presented to the American people. We are being edged into the war without the masses' knowledge. We have the anomalous situation of the polls showing a majority of the people favoring a course that is bound to get us into the war, while the same polls show 86% of the same people oppose actual entry into the war. That shows that the minds of the people are confused.

HOW WARS ARE SOLD TO US

Many of my hearers were adults at the time of the previous war and were familiar with the propaganda that led up to that war. If you want to know the history of that propaganda and its falsity, read a book of Sir Philip Gibbs with the title of "Now It Can Be Told," in which he admitted the outrageous lies that were perpetrated on the American public. And Sir Philip Gibbs was no German but the leading English war correspondent, knighted by his King. The London Economist in a recent issue said it was only a question of time until American public opinion could be brought to the point where we would actively enter the war.

I believe a majority of the people who are advocating "aid short of war" do not desire us to enter the war. But there are others who do desire us to enter the war, who are taking the necessary steps to prepare the American people for active participation, who would enter it tomorrow if they dared, who are today in practical alliance with England, and unfortunately they are the people who are shaping our national policy today. You hear in Washington today that we are now in the war. You hear predictions from men, and men who ought to know, that we will actively enter the war within sixty days after the election.

The American people should think this matter through. *The course we are pursuing is bound to involve us in the war.* You cannot play with fire and not get burned. You cannot have your government, not private manufacturers, transfer its equipment to foreign powers, you cannot have your government in an unofficial alliance with a foreign power, you cannot be a meddler in Indo-China, berate Italy and Germany without eventually involving the nation in war. And if war comes I venture to predict that we will repeat the history of the last war. When the declaration of war was made in 1917 originally it was intended to send only the Navy to the assistance of the Allies.

MAN-POWER, TOO!

Joffre came over in the spring of 1917, told the plight of the French Army after the 1917 spring Champagne offensive, where whole divisions of the French Army mutinied, and implored us to send over a token force, otherwise France would collapse. We sent Pershing and the First Division, about 30,000 men. Then came the impending collapse of Russia, frantic calls for more men, then the great German offensive of 1918 and the rout of the British Fifth Army, more frantic appeals, until finally we put under

arms 4,000,000 men, sent 2,000,000 men to France, spent 20 billion dollars and had 150,000 casualties. I need not refer to our treatment by our former allies after the Armistice. They took the loot, we did not even get a thanks.

I do not often agree with the editorials on foreign policy in my friend Frank Knox's paper, but there is a recent editorial with which I agree 100%. The editorial quoted two recent speeches by both presidential candidates in which both pledged themselves never to send American boys to France. The editorial spoke of both these pledges as political bunk and very truly stated that if we entered the war we would enter it to win and, if necessary to win, we would send an expeditionary force—and that is the absolute truth.

THE PEOPLE MUST KNOW THE TRUTH

The issue should be honestly presented to the people. If we aid Britain, short of war and beyond the limits of the Neutrality Act, it ultimately means war and should mean war. *If we enter the war, we must enter it with all our strength in men and money. That is the only way to win a war.*

If the military reports from abroad are correct, I feel there is no doubt that Great Britain can defend her island, her dominions like Canada, Australia and New Zealand. She may lose Egypt, the Suez and Gibraltar, though this is extremely doubtful. So far the Italian has shown no signs of real offensive strength. There is little doubt that England can make a negotiated peace by which she can keep her fleet and her colonies, but which will leave Germany the economic control of Western Europe. But she cannot decisively defeat Germany unaided. Her statesmen privately admit that, and say that for her to gain a decisive victory we will have to actively enter the war. One of the great mistakes made by the Allies in this war was that in its first six months they thought they could win a safe economical war, with France sitting behind the Maginot line and England maintaining its blockade, with little expenditure of blood and a minimum expenditure of treasure. For us to actively enter the war means ships, planes, money, men, and expeditionary forces. That is the issue that must ultimately be presented to the American people, and it should be presented openly, honesty and squarely.

OUR OWN DEMOCRACY WILL BE SACRIFICED

In deciding this issue, the American people should face the costs. We start with a debt of \$50,000,000,000. With the enormous cost of waging modern war, the cost of sending forces over 3,000 miles of ocean, of engaging our navy in the Far East, we would ultimately face a debt of from

100 to 150 billions. Victorious or defeated, we will be faced at the conclusion of such a war with great economic dislocations—the rich would face a capital levy, the middle class impoverishment and the masses a lowered standard of living and the loss of most of the social gains so far secured.

Competent observers believe that if the war is prolonged in Europe over one or two years, it will result in Communism in all Europe, and a species of National Socialism in England. If we are involved, it probably spells the end of capitalism all over the world.

DEFEND AMERICA FIRST, LAST, ALWAYS

I would unhesitatingly say to throw everything we have into a war to defend the United States or our own sphere of influence, which is the North American continent and part, if not all, of the South American continent. I do not think the American people should make these sacrifices to interfere in the quarrels of Europe and Asia, old, sick and overpopulated continents with ancient rivalries that cannot be healed. It is up to the American people to decide whether they want to make these sacrifices to preserve not England but the British Empire, and help regulate Europe and Asia. But they should make the decision with all the cards on the table, not misled by artifice and subterfuge.

But if that decision is given affirmatively, I think you will find Americans like myself, who sincerely believe such a course spells disaster to the nation, will be at their posts of duty in the service of this country. I am old fashioned enough to believe in the toast offered by Stephen Decatur back in 1816 “Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right: but Our Country, right or wrong.”



Address Against War

Speech of Charles A. Lindbergh given in New York, April 23, 1941.

BY CHARLES A. LINDBERGH

There are many viewpoints from which the issues of this war can be argued. Some are primarily idealistic. Some are primarily practical. One should, I believe, strive for a balance of both. But, since the subjects that can be covered in a single address are limited, tonight I shall discuss the war from a viewpoint which is primarily practical. It is not that I believe ideals are unimportant, even among the realities of war; but if a nation is to survive in a hostile world, its ideals must be backed by the hard logic of military practicability. If the outcome of war depended upon ideals alone, this would be a different world than it is today.

I know I will be severely criticized by the interventionists in America when I say we should not enter a war unless we have a reasonable chance of winning. That, they will claim, is far too materialistic a viewpoint. They will advance again the same arguments that were used to persuade France to declare war against Germany in 1939. But I do not believe that our American ideals, and our way of life, will gain through an unsuccessful war. And I know that the United States is not prepared to wage war in Europe successfully at this time. We are no better prepared today than France was when the interventionists in Europe persuaded her to attack the Siegfried Line.

I have said before, and I will say again, that I believe it will be a tragedy to the entire world if the British Empire collapses. That is one of the main reasons why I opposed this war before it was declared, and why I have constantly advocated a negotiated peace. I did not feel that England and France had a reasonable chance of winning. France has now been defeated; and, de-

spite the propaganda and confusion of recent months, it is now obvious that England is losing the war. I believe this is realized even by the British government. But they have one last desperate plan remaining. They hope that they may be able to persuade us to send another American Expeditionary Force to Europe, and to share with England militarily, as well as financially, the fiasco of this war.

I do not blame England for this hope, or for asking for our assistance. But we now know that she declared a war under circumstances that led to the defeat of every nation that sided with her from Poland to Greece. We know that in the desperation of war England promised to all these nations armed assistance that she could not send. We know that she misinformed them, as she has misinformed us, concerning her state of preparation, her military strength, and the progress of the war.

In time of war, truth is always replaced by propaganda. I do not believe we should be too quick to criticize the actions of a belligerent nation. There is always the question whether we, ourselves, would do better under similar circumstances. But we in this country have a right to think of the welfare of America first, just as the people in England thought first of their own country when they encouraged the smaller nations of Europe to fight against hopeless odds. When England asks us to enter this war, she is considering her own future, and that of her Empire. In making our reply, I believe we should consider the future of the United States and that of the Western Hemisphere.

It is not only our right, but it is our obligation as American citizens to look at this war objectively, and to weigh our chances for success if we should enter it. I have attempted to do this, especially from the standpoint of aviation; and I have been forced to the conclusion that we cannot win this war for England, regardless of how much assistance we extend.

I ask you to look at the map of Europe today and see if you can suggest any way in which we could win this war if we entered it. Suppose we had a large army in America, trained and equipped. Where would we send it to fight? The campaigns of the war show only too clearly how difficult it is to force a landing, or to maintain an army, on a hostile coast. Suppose we took our navy from the Pacific, and used it to convoy British shipping. That would not win the war for England. It would, at best, permit her to exist under the constant bombing of the German air fleet. Suppose we had an air force that we could send to Europe. Where could it operate? Some of our squadrons might be based in the British Isles; but it is physically impossible

to base enough aircraft in the British Isles alone to equal in strength the aircraft that can be based on the continent of Europe.

I have asked these questions on the supposition that we had in existence an army and an air force large enough and well enough equipped to send to Europe; and that we would dare to remove our navy from the Pacific. Even on this basis, I do not see how we could invade the continent of Europe successfully as long as all of that continent and most of Asia is under Axis domination. But the fact is that none of these suppositions are correct. We have only a one-ocean navy. Our army is still untrained and inadequately equipped for foreign war. Our air force is deplorably lacking in modern fighting planes.

When these facts are cited, the interventionists shout that we are defeatists, that we are undermining the principles of Democracy, and that we are giving comfort to Germany by talking about our military weakness. But everything I mention here has been published in our newspapers, and in the reports of congressional hearings in Washington. Our military position is well known to the governments of Europe and Asia. Why, then, should it not be brought to the attention of our own people?

I say it is the interventionist in America, as it was in England and in France, who gives comfort to the enemy. I say it is they who are undermining the principles of Democracy when they demand that we take a course to which more than eighty percent of our citizens are opposed. I charge them with being the real defeatists, for their policy has led to the defeat of every country that followed their advice since this war began. There is no better way to give comfort to an enemy than to divide the people of a nation over the issue of foreign war. There is no shorter road to defeat than by entering a war with inadequate preparation. Every nation that has adopted the interventionist policy of depending on some one else for its own defense has met with nothing but defeat and failure.

When history is written, the responsibility for the downfall of the democracies of Europe will rest squarely upon the shoulders of the interventionists who led their nations into war uninformed and unprepared. With their shouts of defeatism, and their disdain of reality, they have already sent countless thousands of young men to death in Europe. From the campaign of Poland to that of Greece, their prophecies have been false and their policies have failed. Yet these are the people who are calling us defeatists in America today. And they have led this country, too, to the verge of war.

There are many such interventionists in America, but there are more

people among us of a different type. That is why you and I are assembled here tonight. There is a policy open to this nation that will lead to success—a policy that leaves us free to follow our own way of life, and to develop our own civilization. It is not a new and untried idea. It was advocated by Washington. It was incorporated in the Monroe Doctrine. Under its guidance, the United States became the greatest nation in the world. It is based upon the belief that the security of a nation lies in the strength and character of its own people. It recommends the maintenance of armed forces sufficient to defend this hemisphere from attack by any combination of foreign powers. It demands faith in an independent American destiny. This is the policy of the America First Committee today. It is a policy not of isolation, but of independence; not of defeat, but of courage. It is a policy that led this nation to success during the most trying years of our history, and it is a policy that will lead us to success again.

We have weakened ourselves for many months, and still worse, we have divided our own people by this dabbling in Europe's wars. While we should have been concentrating on American defense, we have been forced to argue over foreign quarrels. We must turn our eyes and our faith back to our own country before it is too late. And when we do this, a different vista opens before us. Practically every difficulty we would face in invading Europe becomes an asset to us in defending America. Our enemy, and not we, would then have the problem of transporting millions of troops across the ocean and landing them on a hostile shore. They, and not we, would have to furnish the convoys to transport guns and trucks and munitions and fuel across three thousand miles of water. Our battleships and submarines would then be fighting close to their home bases. We would then do the bombing from the air, and the torpedoing at sea. And if any part of an enemy convoy should ever pass our navy and our air force, they would still be faced with the guns of our coast artillery, and behind them, the divisions of our army.

The United States is better situated from a military standpoint than any other nation in the world. Even in our present condition of unpreparedness, no foreign power is in a position to invade us today. If we concentrate on our own and build the strength that this nation should maintain, no foreign army will ever attempt to land on American shores.

War is not inevitable for this country. Such a claim is defeatism in the true sense. No one can make us fight abroad unless we ourselves are willing to do so. No one will attempt to fight us here if we arm ourselves as a great nation should be armed. Over a hundred million people in this nation are op-

posed to entering the war. If the principles of Democracy mean anything at all, that is reason enough for us to stay out. If we are forced into a war against the wishes of an overwhelming majority of our people, we will have proved Democracy such a failure at home that there will be little use fighting for it abroad.

The time has come when those of us who believe in an independent American destiny must band together, and organize for strength. We have been led toward war by a minority of our people. This minority has power. It has influence. It has a loud voice. But it does not represent the American people. During the last several years, I have travelled over this country, from one end to the other. I have talked to many hundreds of men and women, and I have had letters from tens of thousands more, who feel the same way as you and I. Most of these people have no influence or power. Most of them have no means of expressing their convictions, except by their vote which has always been against this war. They are the citizens who have had to work too hard at their daily jobs to organize political meetings. Hitherto, they have relied upon their vote to express their feelings; but now they find that it is hardly remembered except in the oratory of a political campaign. These people—the majority of hard-working American citizens—are with us. They are the true strength of our country. And they are beginning to realize, as you and I, that there are times when we must sacrifice our normal interests in life in order to insure the safety and the welfare of our nation.

Such a time has come. Such a crisis is here. That is why the America First Committee has been formed—to give voice to the people who have no newspaper, or news reel, or radio station at their command; to the people who must do the paying, and the fighting, and the dying, if this country enters the war.

Whether or not we do enter the war, rests upon the shoulders of you in this audience, upon us here on this platform, upon meetings of this kind that are being held by Americans in every section of the United States today. It depends upon the action we take, and the courage we show at this time. If you believe in an independent destiny for America, if you believe that this country should not enter the war in Europe, we ask you to join the America First Committee in its stand. We ask you to share our faith in the ability of this nation to defend itself, to develop its own civilization, and to contribute to the progress of mankind in a more constructive and intelligent way than has yet been found by the warring nations of Europe. We need your support, and we need it now. The time to act is here.

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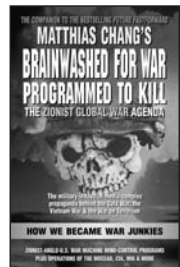
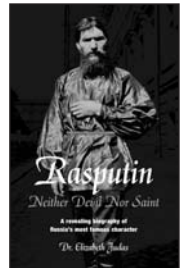
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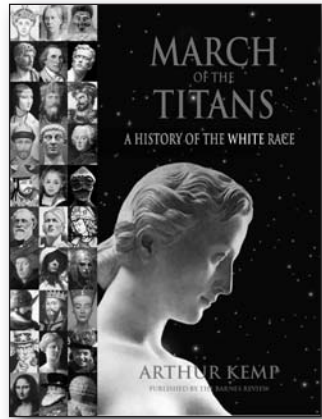
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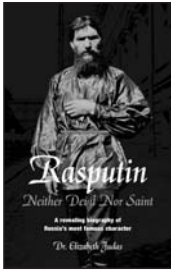
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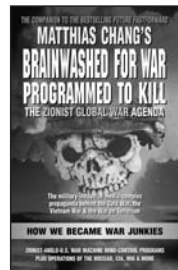
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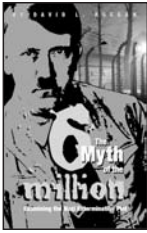
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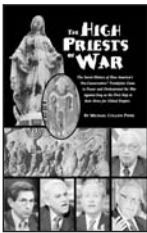


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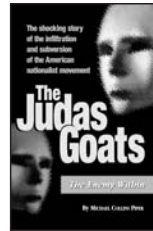
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